Courtney Hiltibran

English 201

Mary Wendt

02/16/2016

Discourse Community

In a discourse community, people communicate in a specific way that only the people in that group would fully understand. These groups of people have a common goal or set of goals in mind that draw them to each other (DePaul). When they communicate together, an outsider may feel as if they are speaking a different language due to the fact that this group of people has developed this way of communication.

Communication is extremely important when trying to reach a common goal. We communicate to provide and seek information (Why do we communicate?). Every human needs to ask questions and it is inevitable that they will be asked questions themselves. However, it is how we communicate in those situations that differ from each other and this is where discourse communities come into play.

The way we communicate with our parents is completely different from how we communicate with our friends. It is also different communicating with our teachers, bosses, family, teammates, coaches, and God. Why does language come across in different ways to all of these different types of people?

It’s almost as if we are trained to act a certain way in specific situations. We would not normally use slang or use curse words towards our parents. We would not normally call the “bro” or “dude.” We would not normally slouch or act lazy in front of our bosses/ professors, the way that we would do in front of our siblings or friends. We would also not normally slap the butt of our coach the way that we would to our teammates.

In the world that we live in today, growing p, we are taught to be respectful to our elders/ those above us. However, it is natural to act spontaneous or laid back in front of those closer to our age like friends or even people of relation. This has become such a natural process that it comes with ease. I believe that this comes from the need to be successful in life, which comes along with caring what people think about the type of person you are and how you act.

Being successful in the United States is becoming more pertinent as time goes on. Money absolutely run the country, and everyone wants to be an important person in that process. To get money for you and your family, you must get a job. To get a high-paying job, college is extremely important. Therefore, students spend four plus years to get a degree, to be able to apply and qualify for a job that will make them as successful as they want to be. When being interview for this high-paying job that they want, they must be respectful and presentable. Hence, why we were taught to act in this way in front of someone that we need to make a good impression on. Even though employers want us o be ourselves, it would be social unacceptable to act the way that we would in front of our friends. Normally, a person would be turned away in that situation. Therefore, we were trained to act certain ways in front of certain people to achieve success.

In a discourse community, it becomes natural to act in a way around the people that you are trying to achieve the same goals as, than around people out in public. How you act in church is an example of a discourse community. Most people know that when you are at church, you are to act respectful, be quiet, and pay attention to the service. However, to know all of these things, you normally would have had to be part of this type of discourse community at least once.

Spending extensive amounts of time with the discourse community that you are part of plays a large role with how you act around them. The longer you interact with your discourse community, the more comfortable you become with being yourself or acting the way that has become natural with them.

When you are part of a sports team, you exchange terms that a random outsider would probably not quite understand if they were to walk past the conversation. Sweat, blood, and tears also put you in a vulnerable place with your teammates that you may only get with your family, hence, why many people call their team, their family. When you’re on a team, you are working extremely hard to reach the goal of winning with your teammates. You know that you need everyone on the team to achieve this goal; therefore, you put that extra effort in to create relationships, so you are better able to understand your teammates on and off of the court, field, or mat.

There are also many differences between the ways we act in front of our teammates than we do around our coaches, even though the goals are the same. This relates back to the way we act around people that we want to impress. We care what our coaches think about us as an athlete, student, and person in general because our coaches are in charge of the amount of playing time that we will receive. We are also taught to respect our coaches because they know more than we do, and a true athlete would want to be coached by our coaches and learn everything that they have to offer. We speak to our coaches with care, which relates back to acting a certain way to achieve success. We want to play and we want to win in a sports discourse community.

References

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